Enhancing the NSW Health Clinical Coding and HIM Workforce

Anita Jacobsen
NSW Health Education and Training Institute (HETI)

30 October 2012
HETI

- Legally established on 2 April 2012
- Leads, coordinates and advocates for quality education and training for the NSW public health system
- One of 4 Pillars for Health Reform
  - working with the Clinical Excellence Commission, Agency for Clinical Innovation and the Bureau of Health Information
- Works closely with the other Pillars to ensure synergies and close alignment of activities.
HETI’s Vision…

“A world class NSW Health workforce supporting excellent patient centred care.”
HETI’s Mission…

‘HETI pursues excellence in health education and training and workforce capability to improve the health of patients and the working lives of NSW Health staff’
Clinical Coding Workforce Enhancement (CCWE) Project - Background

- **NSW Health** - research and consultation dates back to 2009, project proposal endorsed in 2011
- **Responding to New Government priorities**
  - Health and Hospital Workforce Reforms
  - Introduction of Activity Based Funding (July 2012)
- **Clinical coding workforce needs**
  - Current and projected shortfall (*AIHW, 2010*)
  - Hospital separations increasing
- **Challenge** of achieving a balance between quality & timeliness in clinical coding
- **Technological developments (e-health reforms & e-MR)**
  - New skill sets required & new opportunities (remote coding)
Clinical Coding Workforce Census

- Data collection to guide the implementation of the Clinical Coding Workforce Enhancement strategies
- 1 July – 30 September 2011
  - NSW Local Health Districts (LHDs) and 3 specialty Networks provided information on:
    - Clinical coding workforce profiles
    - Vacancies
    - Positions above establishment
### Health Information Services

#### Workforce Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>NSW Health Employee Headcount</th>
<th></th>
<th>FTE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F/T</td>
<td>P/T</td>
<td>Temp</td>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Filled FTE</td>
<td>Vacant FTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Information Manager</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding Manager</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin/Coders</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Coders</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>206.4</td>
<td>33.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>180</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>233.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
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</table>
NSW Health Clinical Coding Workforce and Coding Qualifications

- HIM Degree
- HIMAA Course - Advanced
- HIMAA Course - Intermediate
- HIMAA Course - Introductory
- No coding qualifications
- OTEN Course
- Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coder-admin</th>
<th>Trainee Clinical Coder</th>
<th>Clinical Coder</th>
<th>Senior Clinical Coder</th>
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<tr>
<td>HIM Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIMAA Course</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>Advanced</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No coding</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualifications</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTEN</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>
Project objective: Enhancing the NSW Health Clinical Coder & HIM Workforce

Strategy 1
- Recognise and develop the skills of existing clinical coding staff, to the national occupational standard

Strategy 2
- Recruit and develop new entry-level clinical coders to the national occupational standard

Strategy 3
- Increase the NSW Health HIM Workforce via professionally-recognised courses
Clinical Coding Workforce Enhancement
Project development approach

1. Scoping research and stakeholder consultation
2. Development and approval of project proposal
3. Formation of representative project governance structures
   - Development of appropriate implementation approaches
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation
Clinical Coding Workforce Enhancement
Project Governance Structures

Project Steering Committee

- Strategy 1 - ToES Working Party
- Strategy 2 - RoNET Working Party
- Strategy 3 - Scholarships
  Additional consultation as required
- Extraordinary workshops as required
- Extraordinary workshops as required
Strategy 1: Recognise and develop the skills of existing clinical coding staff

Health information service staff were invited to enrol in

**HLT43212 Certificate IV in Health Administration**

which consists of:

- 5 **core** units of competency; and
- 10 **elective** units of competency, including
  - HLTCC401B Undertake complex clinical coding
  - HLTCC402B Complete highly complex clinical coding (if appropriate)
  - 8 or 9 other units aligned to the work role.
Strategy 1: Recognise and develop the skills of existing clinical coding staff

- Education provider – NSW Health RTO
- Partnership with HIMAA – for units of competency aligned to technical functions:
  - Recognition of current competence
  - License to use learning and assessment resources
- 3 FTE Trainers with significant experience in Health Information Management and Clinical Coding
Enrolments - approximately 130

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LHD/Network</th>
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<th>LHD/Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albury Wodonga</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mid North Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nepean Blue Mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far West</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Northern NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter New England</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Northern Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra Shoalhaven</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sydney Children’s Westmead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrumbidgee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>South Eastern Sydney</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training needs of existing workers

Unable to be recognised as competent to an introductory level of clinical coding
- Undertake express training to attain the introductory CC unit; then
- Complete the qualification at intermediate level

Qualified/recognised as competent to an introductory level of clinical coding
- Complete the qualification at intermediate level; or
- Complete the qualification at advanced level including both intermediate and advanced CC units

Qualified/recognised as competent to an intermediate level of clinical coding
- Complete the qualification at advanced level including only the advanced clinical coding unit

Qualified/recognised as competent to an advanced level of clinical coding
- Complete the qualification, if desired
- Likely to be completed mostly via recognition.
Challenges thus far...

- Difficult to schedule courses as numbers not known before recognition
- Statewide scope
  - reaching out to all equally and fairly
  - different levels and types of clinical coding experience
- Resourcing e.g. Trainer recruitment
- Staffing difficulties; restrictions in releasing staff to attend training activities
Positive observations thus far…

- ABF providing opportunities for much-needed promotion of the profession
  - Shined a light – highlighted issues
- Unique opportunity for professional recognition and development
- **Free** training!
- High level of enthusiasm among participants – particularly in relation to the recognition process
- Low withdrawal rate – retained with increased flexibility
- Ever-increasing interest…
Strategy 2: Recruitment and development to new entry-level trainee clinical coder positions

- Development of **consistent** state-wide recruitment process
  - Common position description, interview questions & Aptitude test
  - Common recruitment timelines
- Most District and Network Chief Executives recently signed off on creation of approximately 30FTE of new 24-month trainee positions across NSW, to commence in February 2013
  - Some big wins for districts creating positions above establishment
  - Some to participate through recruiting to existing vacancies
  - Some unable to participate due to various pressures, hoping to be in a position to do so in 2014.
Strategy 2:
Next step → Recruitment

- Districts and networks currently preparing to advertise new trainee roles
- Selection process to be completed with preferred applicants notified before Christmas
- New trainee clinical coders to commence employment and training in February 2013.
Strategy 2: Skills development
(Training... and recognition!)

**HLT32912 Certificate III in Health Administration**

- BSBMED301B Interpret and apply medical terminology appropriately
- HLTCC301B Produce coded clinical data
- Other units of competency – general health perspective
- Two year program, generally as follows:
  - Months 1-6: Medical Terminology and general health work functions
  - Months 7-12: Introductory Clinical Coding Unit (theory)
  - Months 13-24: Practice clinical coding in the workplace (under supervision)
Strategy 2: Funding support

- NSW Ministry of Health / HETI
  - Funding the education component through the RTO
  - One off contribution towards new trainee salary for all positions created above the current clinical coding establishment
  - Locally-based Clinical Coding Coach positions – Funded at 0.2 FTE per Trainee FTE, at MRM1 award (Senior Clinical Coder)
    - To support the trainee and minimise pressure on the workplace

- Commonwealth traineeship financial assistance
  - Employer incentives for LHDs/Networks
  - In some cases, funding to the NSW Health RTO
  - Allowances to trainees
Strategy 2: Delivery methods

- Program plans currently being developed by NSW Health RTO Training Team
- Combination of delivery methods (face-to-face, distance learning, online) to suit the diverse needs of participants
- Will include on-the-job training component – supported by local coaches
- Flexibility required for project success
  - Flexibility: a feature of the VET system
Strategy 3: Increasing the NSW Health HIM Workforce

- Recognised the current absence of an HIM degree in NSW
  - Threat to ongoing NSW HIM workforce viability
- Encouraging NSW Health employees to consider a career as a Health Information Manager
- Identified industry needs:
  - Multiple pathways into HIM careers
  - Recruitment difficulties in regional/rural areas
  - Increased visibility of HIM career opportunities
  - Education models - supported delivery via distance education
- Potential qualifications for 2013 scholarship program
  - BSc (HIM) – Curtin University
  - Master in HIM – Curtin University
Strategy 3 – Supporting NSW Health employees to develop towards HIM roles

New Qualified HIM

Existing NSW Health non-clinical employee

Existing NSW clinical employee

Existing NSW Health Clinical Coder
Strategy 3 – Qualifications to support multiple entry points

- Employee without relevant Degree/experience
- Bachelor of Science (Health Information Management) - 3 years full-time
- Qualified HIM

- Employee with a relevant Degree/experience
- Masters of Health Information Management - 2 years full-time
- Qualified HIM
Strategy 3 - Meeting industry needs through consultation

- Process: make the most of the investment through a customised application and selection process
  - Districts and networks to support applications
  - Selection panel, interview process, references...

- Rough timeframes (TBC):
  - Early 2013: Development of process
  - March-May: Application and selection process
  - July: First cohort of scholarship recipients to commence

- Scholarships to be administered through established HETI and University scholarship processes.
Evaluation and future considerations

- Sustainability – continue to support our Clinical Coding and HIM workforces
  - Project --> Program: planning for sustainability
- Evaluation of training & workforce outcomes
  - Overall impact – quality improvement indicators
  - Evaluation of the project process
- Training to full qualifications to remain on the NSW Health RTO’s scope of delivery
- Aim: To source ongoing funding to continue to deliver outcomes for the workforce.
Thank you
For more information…

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